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Deformations, &c.

●304 Every child has the ear lobes and the nasal septum pierced; the methods employed are described on p. 98. Raised scars, *pupubo*, are commonly seen on the chests and shoulders of women, where they are self-inflicted, usually in the extremity of grief. Other scars, particularly those on the forehead, are the result of the practice of blood-letting to relieve pain. In some few instances we see keloids on the arms and across the sternum which, hideous as they seem to European eyes, are said to be made with the sole idea of personal enhancement.

[157]

There is no deformation of the genitalia. Informants have invariably been both astounded and amused at the notion of circumcision. And yet we have two early notes—both of them from competent observers—which state definitely that the practice existed. Mr. H. O. Forbes made a voyage up the north-east coast in 1885 and got into touch with the natives of Holincote [Holnicote?] Bay, who waded a long way out to his boat. He remarked on the poorness of their houses, the mean description of their ornaments, and the fact that they 'were all circumcised'.[1] Eight years later Sir Wm. MacGregor wrote of the natives about Gona (presumably the same district) that 'some are circumcised, others not'.[2] This was Sir William's first visit to the locality, and I cannot but believe that he was guilty of an unaccustomed malobservation. Nowadays, so far from practising circumcision, the native regards the exposure of the *glans penis* as shameful and ridiculous, and even employs the expression *bi panjari* (bald) as a term of abuse. Probably what the two observers saw was not due to a surgical cause but to nature, or else we must assume a very remarkable change in custom of which I have discovered no hint or recollection.

[834]

Tattoo (*Tavoro*) is uncommon and, where it is found, wholly inferior. It is seen usually on girls, but is not a general habit of the people.[3] Tattoo is entirely voluntary

[1] Memo. in *Report on British New Guinea*, 1886, p. 43.

[2] *Annual Report*, 1893–4, p. 4.

[3] Nevertheless the habit is evidently of old standing. MacGregor on first visiting Oro Bay wrote: 'A few had some tattoo-marks on the face, but this was neither well done nor deeply marked.' *Annual Report*, 1890–91, p. 16.

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and has no ceremonial significance. It is made by inflicting innumerable punctures with a thorn over a pattern made on the skin with charcoal.

Personal Hygiene

The Orokaiva is as dirty as and no dirtier than the next native. He hates the feel of cold water unless he is already hot and perspiring, and he would rather take a bath to get cool than to get clean. After his bathe he anoints his body and hair with the oily milk of the coco-nut, which he uses at all times with freedom. The somewhat rancid smell which one notices at times may be rather the effect of this oil than a genuine body odour.

The native uses a variety of perfumes which are not always alluring, and are sometimes even repulsive to the senses of a European. He wears sprigs of scented leaf in his armlet which he thinks will increase his sexual attraction. It is interesting to note that the delightful aroma of the lime tree (an introduction found in every village) has actually been declared unpleasant by some informants.

Face Painting

Faces are painted as a rule on gala occasions alone, but a young man who is intent on the self-display which constitutes the earlier stage of native love-making may on his own initiative wear a forehead ornament and decorate his cheeks. Nowadays he uses a trade mirror; formerly he poured water into a wooden bowl (*teva*) or one of those stone mortars which are still to be found in the Northern Division, and for which this use, viz. that of a mirror, is the only explanation a native can offer.

The paints used are a red seed (*obonda sari*), red ochre (*obonda opasi*), red clay (*niani*), grey or whitish clay (*onu*), charcoal (*oku*), and a leaf called *sopapa*. The last is crushed and mixed with lime and spittle, and forms a bright greenish yellow. I have discovered no trace of clan or tribal markings, the only approach toward distinctive patterns being found in the one or two devices employed by sects of the Taro cult.[1]

[1] 'The Taro Cult', in *Orokaiva Magic*, p. 67.

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practice the new name (that of the slain) almost entirely supersedes the old; and, what is of importance here, the name of the slain warrior is sometimes taken not by the slayer himself but by his son. Instances of this are not uncommon.

Body Deformations. The perforations of the ear-lobes are made within the first few months of the infant's life. The piercing of the nasal septum is delayed until it is perhaps a year or so old. Among nearly all the Orokaiva both operations are performed simply by clamping on a tortoise-shell ring (*siatu*) which gradually works through the flesh. Strictly speaking it is the duty of the *tato* to provide the *siatu*, but the rule is not always observed.[1] Among the Hunjara tribe, I believe, it is the custom to defer the making of the nose-hole until the initiation ceremony, when youths and girls, sitting in a row, have to submit their noses to a painful and sometimes bloody thrust with a bone needle.

The Assumption of Clothing. Young children—boys or girls—go naked. With boys it is usual among all the tribes to assume the perineal band (*bo*) at various ages before they reach puberty. This is certainly the modern usage, and I believe it was the former usage also. Whether it was formerly permissible for the boy to adopt his *bo* without any ceremony (as he sometimes does nowadays) I cannot say; but it appears that any festivity might be made the occasion of bestowing it. For instance, at a dance which forms one of the earliest of the mortuary ceremonies, a youngster received his *bo* as a sort of extraneous incident in the day's procedure; and the same occurred in another ceremony in which the widow was finally discarding her mourning. The formal bestowal of a *bo* means a present to the man who bestows it, so that when a pig is killed for any major ceremony it is a good opportunity for providing a share as payment for a minor rite. The occasion for honouring the child is all the more fitting as a large number of spectators will be present.

[1] In *J. R. A. I.* liv, 1923, p. 407, I wrote: 'The maternal uncle has certain ceremonial duties to perform, e. g. that of piercing the child's nose. . . .' It appears, however, that this duty does not belong necessarily to the maternal uncle or sole.